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ABSTRACT

Four papers discuss the status of materials and methods for teaching limited-English-proficient (LEP) students of all ages. "Elementary Literacy Materials" (Molly Bensinger-Lacy) describes materials and activities used in the Fairfax County (Virginia) Public Schools' program for nonliterate LEP elementary students, and provides illustrations. "Directions in Literacy for Secondary LEP Students" (Susan Haverson) outlines the optimal characteristics of instructional design for LEP students, based on new understandings of brain functions and individual learning processes and giving recognition to the LEP student's unique cultural experiences. "Meeting the Educational Needs of the Nonliterate Limited-English-Speaking Adult" (Elaine Baush) describes the history, development, and effective techniques used in the Fairfax County Public Schools' program of English as a second language for adults. "Basic Skills Education in the Army" (Harvey Rosenbaum) discusses problems associated with limited literacy and limited English proficiency in the military, and reviews some of the Army's basic skills programs. The summary of two specialists' responses to the papers is also included. (MSE)

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FROM SCHOOL TO WORK:

MATERIALS AND METHODS FOR TEACHING

THE LIMITED-ENGLISH-PROFICIENT (LEP) STUDENT

Elementary Literacy Materials	Molly Bensinger-Lacy
Directions in Literacy for Secondary LEP Students	Susan Haverson
Meeting the Educational Needs of the Nonliterate Limited-English-Speaking Adult	Elaine Baush
Basic Skills Education in the Army	Harvey Rosenbaum

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ELEMENTARY LITERACY MATERIALS

Molly Bensinger-Lacy
Fairfax County Public Schools

In 1975, Fairfax County Public Schools received its first large influx of refugees from Southeast Asia. For the most part, the students we received were urban, well-educated, and had had contact with U.S. and/or French culture. Our job as ESL teachers was mainly one of giving our students English labels for concepts they already knew in their first language. Beginning in 1978, we started to see a change in the type of student entering our program. In increasing numbers, our more recent students are from rural areas with little or no contact with western culture or with a technologically advanced society. Southeast Asian, Central American and Middle Eastern, they and their parents often have had little or no formal education.

The education of these less-prepared students requires us to provide, among other things, information for cultural adjustment, English instruction, literacy skills, and world knowledge. ESL teachers are called on in some cases to help students adjust to the use of modern toilets, to teach the use of writing implements to older students while trying to make clear the concept of phoneme/grapheme correlation, and/or to provide students with world knowledge about such basic concepts as the relationship between size and distance; e.g., why the sun appears small to us and yet is actually very large.

At present in Fairfax County Public Schools, there are about 200 nonliterate students in the elementary grades. There are also 150, 17-20 year-old students in vocational education programs, which are designed to address the needs of the older nonliterate students.

Four years ago, two high school ESL teachers who had a group of these nonliterate or borderline literate students developed HELP (Highlighting English, A Literacy Program). It soon became clear that these students did not have the necessary prerequisites for the HELP curriculum, such as fine motor skills, visual processing skills and auditory processing skills.

About the same time, the number of elementary nonliterate students had begun to grow and teachers were requesting help. The regular readiness materials available at the elementary level were not successful with these children, and even beginning pencil and paper activities were inappropriate. So we went back to the drawing board and compiled PRE (Pre Readiness Instructional Program). Although HELP was originally for secondary students and PRE for elementary, they can be and are being adapted to both levels.

Two overriding principles influence all classroom activities associated with the PRE program. First, listening comprehension is primary, and speaking is a by-product of aural comprehension. Only where survival requires it should speaking be required. This approach is appropriate for any beginning L2 classroom but is particularly good in reducing stress in nonliterate students unaccustomed to formal education. Active listening is the goal at all times. Secondly, no traditional pencil and paper activities are allowed except near the completion of the program when copying of the alphabet is attempted.

The program for nonliterate LEP elementary students addresses the development or strengthening of gross motor skills, fine motor skills, auditory

processing, visual process, learning processes, and memory processes while students are learning to understand and speak English. Our objectives and instructional ideas were from people who know a lot about what is necessary before reading and writing can take place. Our sources include the Early childhood Program of Studies, the Kindergarten Program of Studies, the Motor Development Curriculum Guide (all from Fairfax County Schools, and commercial materials at these levels. Our language objectives are from the Fairfax County Public Schools ESL beginning level of objectives.

Total Physical Response (TPR). TPR is the primary means of L2 instruction in the PRE program. In TPR the second language is taught predominantly through commands coupled with physical response from the learner. Speaking is encouraged only after students demonstrate aural comprehension of an item. TPR can be used in any L2 classroom but is particularly suitable for use with our targeted population because of its deemphasis on speaking, which lowers stress, and the constant use of physical response improves on-task time for students not used to sitting in classrooms for long periods. Also, the command format provides a convenient way to practice prereadiness skills, e.g., Button/Unbutton the skirt; Pick up the blue buttons and put them in the bottle, which is practice of fine motor skills.

Sample Activities. Samples of activities to develop skills in the following areas are presented in figures at the end of this paper: Auditory processing, Visual processing, Fine motor skills, Gross motor skills, Learning processes, and Memory processes.

HELP consists of thirty lessons, one for each letter of the alphabet and one for each of the following: /θ/, /ð/, /š/, /č/, /hw/.

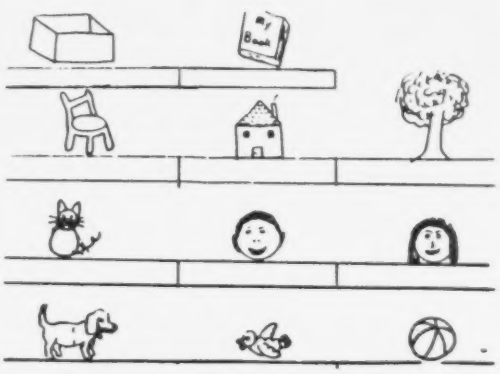
Strong points of HELP include an uncluttered format on student worksheets, tasks broken down into small increments to insure success, new types of activities introduced one at a time with plenty of time allowed for familiarization before the next new type is presented, and a good teacher's guide with extra resources and reproducible worksheets.

Each of the thirty lessons has basically the same format. First, the new letter is presented and practiced. Most new vocabulary for each lesson begins with the target letter. The words are traced, copied, presented in word searches, and in scrambled letter, matching, configuration, and cloze exercises. The words are practiced in phrases and then presented as part of a story accompanied by comprehension questions. Each lesson includes new grammatical objectives as well as built-in review.

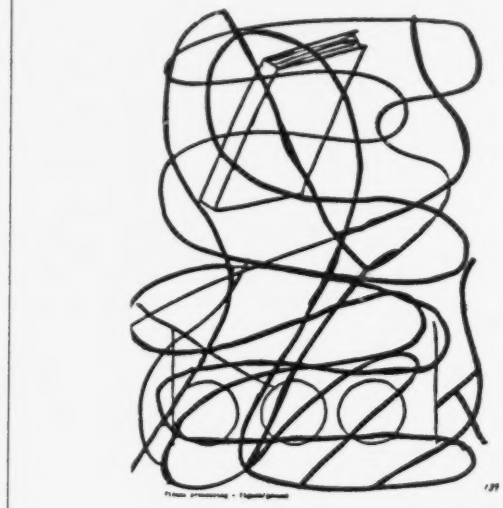
The teaching techniques remain the same when HELP is used at the elementary level, with changes. The exercises are reproduced with larger print. Some stories are changed, some omitted, and some added to make the materials more appropriate for younger students. When new vocabulary of the lessons is introduced to elementary students, all of the suggested ways in the teacher's guide are used rather than a selective process.

Although both programs described above are still in draft form, they are being used in part or as complete programs by individual ESL teachers who have nonliterate students in their classes. A copy of either or both program guides are available from, Dr. Esther J. Eisenhower, ESL Program Coordinator, Lacey Instructional Center at Masonville, 3705 Crest Drive, Annandale, Virginia 22003.

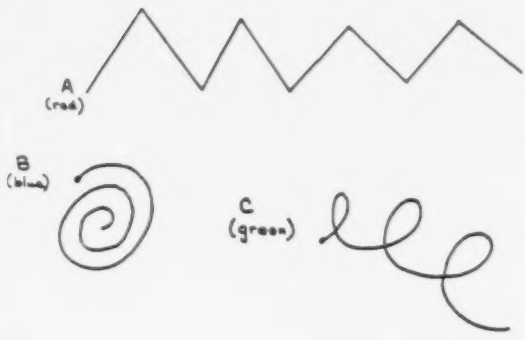
Samples: Pre-HELP

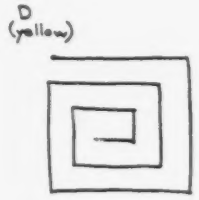


Fine motor skills - Finger puppets



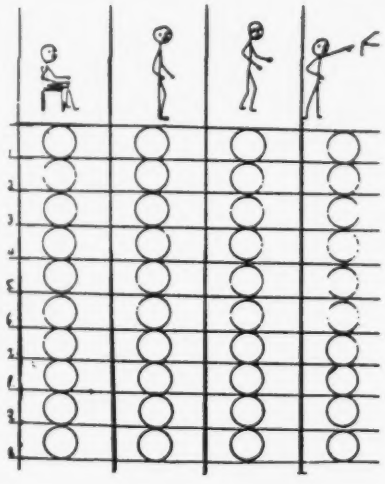
Visual processing - Figure/ground



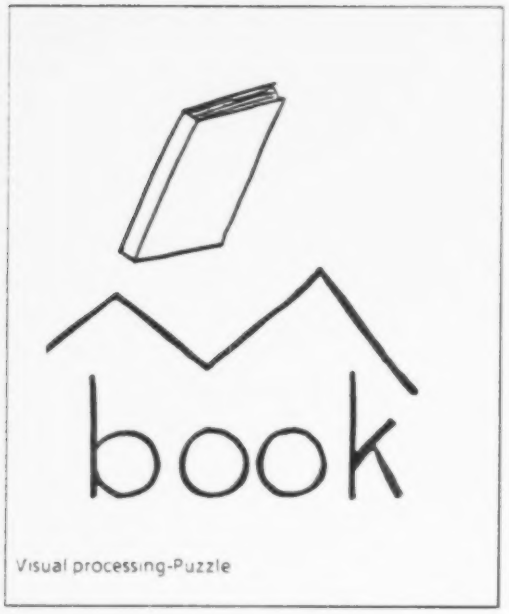


1. Use regular or colored masking tape to make shapes on floor or playground.
2. Collect assorted objects: book with pencil on it, plate filled with sand, erasers, etc.
3. Instruct student to go to A (or rod) and hop (run or jump) the line holding one of the objects.

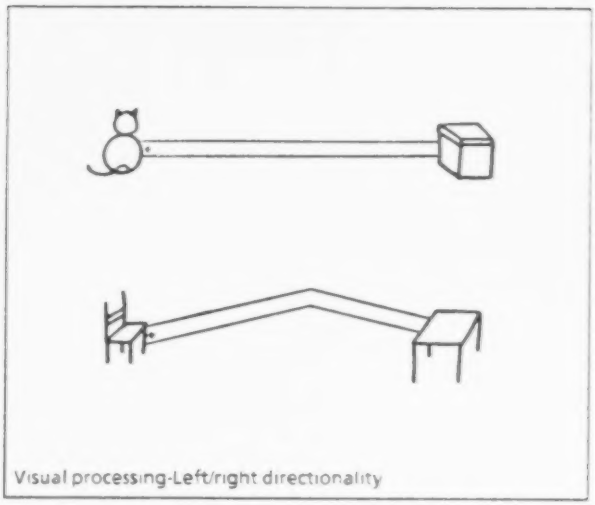
Gross motor skills



Auditory processing

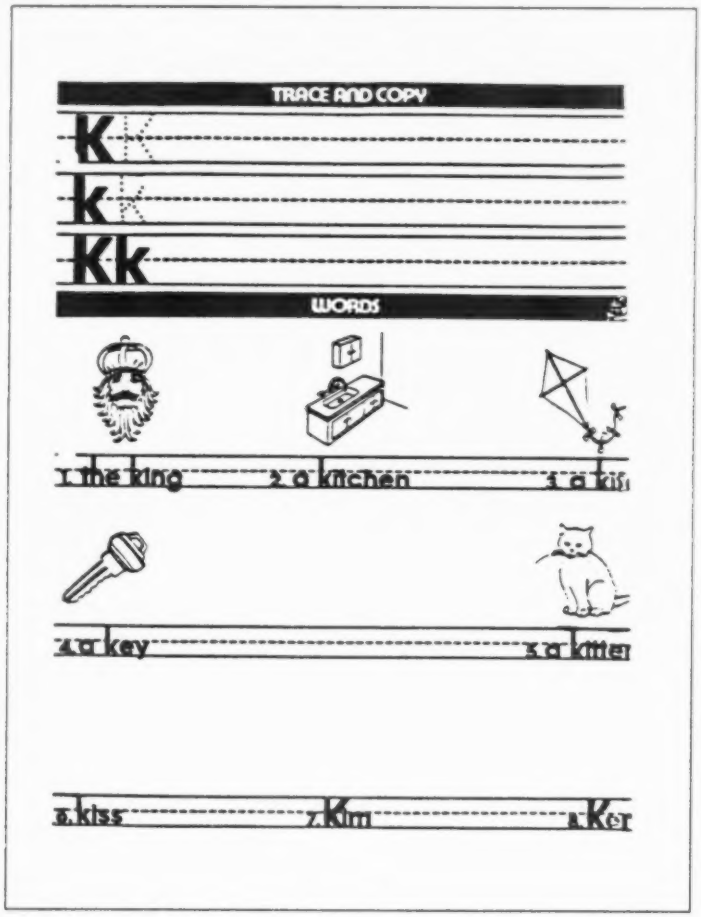


Visual processing-Puzzle



Visual processing-Left/right directionality

Sample page from HELP lesson



DIRECTIONS IN LITERACY FOR SECONDARY LEP STUDENTS

Susan Haverson
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There is a challenge that needs to be confronted in the education of Language-Minority students, one that defines a new and dynamic vision that would yield a renewed sense of direction and purpose, and inspire the necessary energy and commitment to ensure the implementation of appropriate instruction. While looking at maintaining programs at greatly reduced funding levels we need also to look at making them much better.

What are the literacy needs of secondary LEP students? What literacy tasks are secondary students expected to be able to perform? Some of the expectations of the typical secondary school follow:

- Students must be able to read for information and content in textbooks and in other printed matter.
- Students must be able to write paragraphs and compositions.
- Students must take tests and pass competencies.
- Students must write book reports and research papers.
- Students must fill out applications and other forms.

What then should the purpose of literacy instruction be for the LEP student? Survival proficiency? Academic proficiency? What do we want our students to be able to read for? To pass competency tests? To fill out job applications? Or do we have more long-term goals in mind when we talk about literacy instruction? Our perspectives on the issues will differ, and there needs to be healthy debate about how best to serve secondary LEP students to ensure their access--to the world of print, and to the world at large.

Frank Smith and the Goodmans convincingly argue that the target of reading must be meaning. My own experiences in the classroom and my students have also convinced me that one learns to read only through materials and activities that make sense to him or her, that can be related to what is already known (Smith, 1983). The importance of reading for meaning reinforces current practices in bilingual education programs around the country that provide initial reading instruction in the students' native language until the students have acquired enough strategies to transfer easily to English reading. I also support the notion that reading is not something that can be taught, rather it is the teacher's responsibility to make it possible to learn. In most reading classes I have observed in the Middle School or in remedial reading classes in the high school into which many of our LEP students are mainstreamed, reading is presented as a series of isolated skills which serves to confuse them about the function and purpose of reading and writing. In a classroom where the focus of instruction is on reading for meaning the readers are encouraged to make guesses and predictions about print, based on their prior experience or background knowledge and other available clues. Thus it seems that meaningful learning does not take place by presenting material in a step-by-step linear fashion. Teaching to a rigid set of objectives will never promote such learning because as with meaningful learning, one can never predict what the outcome will be (Smith, 1983). A definition of meaningful instruction might be this: Learning which engages the learner in a way that integrates the student's prior knowledge with the new material to be learned. Those familiar with schema theory will recognize that comprehension is

as dependent on what is in the reader's head as it is on what is printed, or, the more we know before we read, the more we learn when we read. This notion has tremendous implication for our secondary LEP students who are trying to make sense of an American History or Social Studies text when prior experience with the information is non-existent.

Methods of instruction that present activities that occur before students read content materials are essential to promoting literacy development. Providing background information and previewing content for the reader seem to be the most obvious strategies for the teacher of LEP students. "The idea is to avoid having students read the material cold." (Atwell and Rhodes, 1984)

For the secondary LEP student, this means spending a great deal of time in pre-reading activities to develop the necessary schema for comprehending the text. For example, at the Salem Newcomer Center, we have identified a variety of activities for our beginning students to help them develop a schemata for Social Studies prior to reading a text. These activities include the presentation of visuals, films, demonstrations, hands-on projects, brainstorming strategies and small-group work. The text is only introduced after we are certain that most of the information is already in the reader's head. Many teachers have suggested to me that this pre-reading approach is an unrealistic expectation for mainstream teachers to use with their secondary LEP students. I maintain that all of their students would benefit if teachers were willing to spend time in developing the background knowledge of their students. I would go so far as to suggest that students might even look forward to reading their history text if sufficient time were spent in preparing them to read it.

Reading and writing cannot be separated and taught as two distinct activities. Even the most beginning LEP students can produce written language and get a feeling of satisfaction and success from reading a story they have produced from their own experience. When writing consists most of the time of completing worksheets, answering questions, writing a paragraph or composition paying close attention to mechanics, spelling and punctuation, it is viewed as a boring activity by most students. If our students, on the other hand, are presented with writing as a process that helps them discover or refine patterns of organization about the language, which in fact helps them to become better thinkers, an interest in writing might be ignited, or at the very least, a willingness to consider writing as a useful, purposeful activity. I have noticed that my students enjoy working together in small groups on writing tasks as long as they are sure that the atmosphere is free of threat. They work together to write summaries of the content we have just learned, or to write another ending to an exciting story that has been presented to them. Journal writing has always been an activity that students have responded to enthusiastically. Reading and writing must be seen as activities that are meaningful. The teacher is the model. She must read with the students, write with them, and of course, at the same time, learn with them.

Smith proposes that "there is no reason why fluency in writing should not develop concurrently with fluency in other aspects of language. They have the same roots - the urge to make sense of the world and of oneself. Students should come to writing as a natural means of expression and exploration, like speech, music and art. As long as writing remains a natural and purposeful activity, made available without threat, students will be able to practice it and consequently, will learn." (Smith, 1983). He maintains that we learn to write by reading and that "students will learn to write and to enjoy writing only in the

presence of teachers or other adults who themselves enjoy writing. A desirable goal would be for all teachers to learn to become at least moderately competent writers. And for this they should not themselves turn to the exercises and 'how to do it' books anymore than they should try to educate their own students that way." (Smith, 1983)

Let us turn our attention to curriculum considerations in an effort to present LEP students with a more appropriate instructional design. The difficulty in talking about curriculum is that "the notion inherently embodies two flagrantly untrue propositions: that what is taught will be learned and that what is to be learned can fit into neatly, packaged, exactly-timed courses." (Hart, 1983) Current research in brain functions and human learning loudly protests these propositions. Students learn by being in an environment where learning is allowed to happen, where the natural processes of the brain to make sense of the world are not inhibited by being directed to focus on isolated skills that have nothing to do with meaning. Atwell and Rhodes talk about the differences between skill lessons and strategy lessons: "Skill lessons based on linear models of reading continue to dominate school reading curricula, the goal of which is to be able to check off a series of competencies mastered." Strategy lessons, on the other hand, are based on models that promote reading as a constructive process, are process-oriented, and encourage active student involvement in a way that helps readers link their backgrounds and knowledge to the topic or activity. Strategy lessons are usually characterized by student-to-student communication and divergent thinking. "While the uninformed observer may believe that the students are not attending to the task, it is precisely the reading, talking and thinking that is the task." (Atwell and Rhodes, 1984) Instead of looking for the right answers, the students are encouraged to share and extend what they know before, during and after reading the text. Instead of focusing on a series of competencies, the teacher is freed to follow the lead and pace set by the students themselves. (Atwell and Rhodes, 1984)

A curriculum design that might be implemented in such a classroom may have the following characteristics:

- It takes into consideration the background knowledge of the students and the wealth of information and experience with which all students come to school.
- It guides students to make predictions about the text information based on their background knowledge.
- It does not waste time on teaching reading as a set of tiny skills with a lot of time spent on worksheets and skill sheets.
- Reading is presented as a whole-language comprehension-centered activity.
- Reading and writing are integrated, with one helping the other.
- It encourages and supports the natural curiosity of the reader by providing activities that go far beyond the artificial walls of the classroom and capitalizes on the natural drive of the learner to make sense of his or her world.
- It supports the belief that reading is as natural as speaking and that communicates the expectation for success with qualification at all times.
- Reading and writing are viewed as process-oriented and not product-driven.

- It provides for feedback in such a way that learners can find out if their pattern extraction and recognition of the language is correct or improving and it recognizes that "it only serves to confuse and inhibit to tell the learner who is on the right track, that an effort made is wrong because performance is poor." (Hart, 1983)
- It allows the teacher to communicate her passion for reading. As Susan Ohanian so eloquently states: "You can't be neutral about reading. It requires partisanship and faith--faith in words and faith in kids. Without this faith, you begin to run scared and you're in danger of being smothered by other people's precautions and prescriptions. When you're able to act on your faith, you will be able to help students find their own strengths in a way that no system, no checklist, no set of objectives or skillbooks or duplicating masters can touch." (Ohanian, 1985)

In summary, on the issue of curriculum design, perhaps what is most needed is a better theory of learning, based on new understandings of brain functions and application of the operations and how learning takes place, and how learning styles vary, that gives recognition to the unique, cultural background experiences of the LEP student.

It seems unlikely that the need for change in curriculum design will be given much attention, at least in the foreseeable future. Due to the ever-increasing dictates and mandates imposed on educators in the name of accountability, competency-based instruction, pre- and post-testing, basic skills instruction, measurable outcomes and a host of other instruction-inhibiting buzz words seem to remain the order of today. The national concern about about the growing drop-out rates in minority populations will hopefully lead someone in a high place to take a look at what is not working at the secondary level and to give thought to the notion that providing more of the same, indeed, intensifying the effort, will probably led to an even greater drop-out figure.

I have been asked to comment on materials in the field that I judge as useful in providing literacy instruction. Most of the materials I have reviewed designed for this purpose present reading and writing in a unnatural format bearing little relationship to the purpose of reading or the real world of the learner. On the other hand, there have been a number of books that my students have responded to with great enthusiasm. I have used high interest adventure stories that include examples of science fiction, sports stories, fantasy and mystery. Initially, many days are spent in preparing the students to read the text, in arousing their interest, in provoking their curiosity and in connecting their prior knowledge to the information in the story. At all times, the students are encouraged to ask questions for clarification or for confirmation of their sense of the information.

I am pleased to see that materials are beginning to be published for the beginning LEP student that recognize the import of background knowledge as a prerequisite to reading success. These materials put special emphasis on the important of language experience as the connection to other printed matter.

For the most part, published reading programs or basal reading series cannot demonstrate what reading and writing are for. "Teachers can demonstrate the utility of literacy by ensuring that students observe and participate in written language activities that have a purpose-stories to be written and read for pleasure, poems to be recited, songs to be sung, plays to be acted, newspapers and

announcements to be read, all the multiplicity of ways in which written language is used and taken for granted in the world at large." (Smith, 1983)

In conclusion, it seems that a variety of instructional changes are in order if we are to effectively serve secondary LEP students. James Britton articulates a need for change well: "There lies ahead of us the enormous task of translating what we know of language acquisition, language development, and the nature of learning into structures by which teaching and learning in school may be organized. Too often today the call for 'structure' takes the form of demanding the preservation of, or a return to, lockstep procedures that grew up in ignorance of the nature of learning and reflecting a mistaken view of knowledge and hence of curriculum. In this task, teachers must take a lead, both as to theory and as to practice, if the structures devised are to be workable and grounded in experience. The further participation of linguists, psychologists and sociologists will be essential." (Britton, 1977)

Returning now to a vision of secondary education for the LEP student, let us imagine a classroom where:

- Students are actively involved in literacy activities that have meaning and application to the real world.
- Students achieve success in literacy tasks because the curriculum has been designed to not only accommodate, but also to capitalize on their unique background and experiences.
- Students become and remain literate in their first and second languages.
- Students are in an environment where success and achievement for all are not only attainable but taken for granted.

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MEETING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF THE NONLITERATE LIMITED-ENGLISH-SPEAKING ADULT

Elaine Baush

Fairfax County Public Schools
Office of Adult and Community Education

Because of its size and the diversity of the population it serves, the Fairfax County Public Schools English as a Second Language (ESL) program for adults has faced most, if not all, of the literacy problems encountered by smaller programs. Approximately 1,800 adults are enrolled in 100 classes in any give term. They speak some 75 languages and represent 100 different countries. Their educational and cultural backgrounds vary as do their immediate goals and future aspirations. While 25% of these limited-English-proficient (LEP) adults have had some college education and 50% have completed somewhere between 9 and 12 years of schooling, another 25% have less than an 8th grade education and 10% have had less than 5 years. Some of the latter have never been inside a schoolroom or held a pencil. In all of the above groups, there are adults whose English ranges from zero command to quite fluent.

Before 1980, the LEP adult in our program who was not literate in his native language and the roman alphabet was a rarity. The few isolated cases brought to our attention were referred to the Northern Virginia Literacy Council for individual tutoring. While our ESL program for adults purported to emphasize spoken English, teachers relied heavily on texts and were not prepared to deal with the occasional nonliterate in their class.

In the early 1980's with a influx of refugees from Southeast Asia, Central and South America, and Afghanistan, the number of nonliterate and semiliterate LEP adults began to grow. By 1982, it had exceeded the capability of the literacy council, whose primary purpose was to teach literacy, not ESL, to provide tutors. Since the mission of adult basic education is to give priority to those "least educated and most in need," we felt a responsibility to serve this segment of the population above all others.

Our first tactic was to absorb the nonliterate adult into our regular ESL classes. In locations where there were several such adults, the students were regrouped for reading and writing activities. The nonliterate students could work on pre-reading activities and basic literacy skills during this time. Students who were beyond the beginning level in their speaking and listening skills could join the nonliterate beginners for literacy instruction. This solution had several advantages. It forced teachers to focus on oral communicative competencies and to rely less heavily on grammar and printed texts. Our "spoken English" classes more nearly approached what they were advertised to be. The solution was not without problems, however. There was much anxiety and resistance on the part of teachers. They were not used to teaching nonliterate students, and most did not have such training. They could no longer rely on a text for their course of study, and in fact, they would lose their nonliterate students if they used the blackboard or print materials to any great extent. Two other problems soon became obvious. The literate students learned differently, needed different materials and progressed at a different rate from the nonliterate adults in the same class. Also, it was very difficult to coordinate the reading/writing/literacy instruction with oral/aural instruction, especially when students were pulled from different classes for the former.

Because of the aforementioned problems, and because the numbers of nonliterates continued to grow, special "literacy" classes were established in 1983. In non-intensive sites, these were scheduled on opposite nights from the regular beginning and intermediate classes so an adult could take beginning or intermediate ESL, for example on Monday and Wednesday nights and literacy class were on Tuesday and Thursday nights. The majority of the nonliterate adults enrolled in a literacy class instead of a beginning or intermediate ESL class, however. They seemed to feel more comfortable in the literacy class and it apparently met what they perceived to be their greatest need. There was also some indication that two different classes meeting a total of four nights a week was too much for these adults to cope with.

The literacy classes were quite popular. As soon as the word was out that one could learn English even if one couldn't read or write, the classes filled quickly. In the second year, five sections filled with 10 or more students each. It was then that the complexity of the problem became apparent. With the only requirement of enrolling in these classes being an inability to read and write in English, some very heterogeneous groups appeared. We had students who spoke no English and students who spoke and understood quite a bit, some who were well educated in a non-roman alphabet language and some with little or no formal schooling or literacy in any language. When the diversity in socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of the students was taken into consideration, even a class of 10 or 12 presented a very wide range of needs and abilities. It soon became apparent that to meet the individual needs of such a diverse group of adults was an extraordinary task and would require extraordinary solutions, necessitating a reappraisal of the program.

In order to determine where to go from here, we find we must ask ourselves the following questions, realizing that it may take different solutions to meet the needs of various types of students.

WHO are our nonliterate LEP students? In their home country, did they function in a predominantly nonliterate or a predominantly literate society? Do they feel a need to become literate or just to speak and understand English?

WHY do these students need literacy skills in English? If they perceive a need for English literacy, what are their specific literacy needs? Do they need literacy skills to meet their everyday survival needs, as a tool to learn English, to obtain further education or to function as a literate adult in U.S. society at the level they functioned in their home country?

WHAT shall we teach them to best meet their needs? Survival sight words? Decoding skills?

WHEN shall we teach literacy--before, after or simultaneously with speaking and listening? Would we organize special sections of beginning and intermediate classes for the nonliterate students?

WHERE can we deliver this instruction most efficiently and effectively? In regular ESL classes, special literacy classes or individual tutoring situations?

HOW can we teach these adults most effectively? What are the best methods and materials to do the job?

For the immediate future, we plan to try a combination of group and individual instruction. Special sections of beginning ESL will be organized for the nonliterate LEP adult. Where the numbers warrant, special "literacy" sections will also be offered at the intermediate level. These classes will concentrate on spoken English using communicative activities, visuals and realia, and ESL texts specifically designed for the nonliterate adult. Certain symbols and sight words necessary for survival will be taught to the entire class (e.g., traffic signals, IN, OUT, DANGER). Other literacy instruction will be conducted individually and in small groups by volunteers under the direction of the teacher.

Volunteers will be recruited from the general public, colleges and universities, prospective teachers and advanced ESL students. They will be trained by literacy teachers in structured sessions to include literacy sensitivity, methods of instruction and introduction to materials. The goal will be to have a teacher and one or two volunteers for every class of 10 to 12 students.

The successful teacher of literacy to LEP adults uses a variety of methods and materials. Strategies our teachers have found most successful include:

Labels in the classroom. The daily exposure to the printed word associated with the object (window, door, table, chair, floor, etc.) is an efficient reinforcement and builds confidence. Words should be introduced gradually and labels removed when their usefulness has expired.

Matching pictures and spoken English to words and sentences is an effective strategy that focuses on meaning. Students are asked to identify which picture represents a spoken word or sentence, then to say the word or sentence in response to a picture. After the words or sentences are introduced in print, students identify the word or sentence in response to the spoken word and picture and finally read the word or sentence alone. This strategy helps the nonliterate adult see the printed word as "language written down." The ability to recognize larger chunks of language early in the learning process can be a great confidence booster for the nonliterate LEP adult.

Total Physical Response (TPR). Popular in teaching comprehension of spoken English, it can be just as effective in the teaching of reading. Students respond first to the spoken word, then to the printed word accompanied by the spoken word, and finally to the printed word alone. TPR can be used at the letter recognition level "Show me the letter 'H'," the word level," "Smile," and at the sentence level, "Go to the door."

The game, Concentration, in which the student matches picture cards to word cards is a good individual or small group activity which can be devised at the word, phrase and sentence level. Road signs, for example, lend themselves well to this type of exercise. The symbol for NO LEFT TURN is put on one card and the printed words on another. Students pick 2 cards each way and try to find a match.

The Language Experience Approach (LEA), a favorite of elementary school teachers, builds on ideas and language that is meaningful to the students. The student dictates to the teacher what s/he wants written down. The student can then "read" what s/he has just said. One way to elicit an LEA story from a group of students is to use a series of pictures. The students discuss the story suggested by the pictures and come to a consensus on

sentences that tell the story. The teacher then writes the story on the board. Other experiences can also can be to describe the weather, a classmate, etc.

Close exercises are good follow-ups to a language experience story. They can be as simple as one word omitted, or as complex as every other (4th, 10th) word omitted.

Field trips enable students to learn immediately relevant language in a real life situation. Field trips need not be elaborate excursions--a trip to the restroom, public telephone or vending machine can provide valuable literacy materials if well planned. Students can look for words introduced earlier in class (MEN, WOMEN, COIN RETURN, EXIT, PUSH, PULL) or the teacher can introduce the words on the spot and follow up in class.

Songs and chants, so effective in teaching rhythm and intonation patterns, and to give a change of pace to a class, are also effective reading materials for the beginning reader. The repetition makes them easy to remember.

Puzzles (wordsearch, crossword, etc.) provide good reinforcement of sight words.

The phonics approach, stressing regularities in sound/symbol correspondence, is particularly effective with adults who are well educated in their own language. These adults have already been successful at becoming literate in one language and frequently want to learn to decode. It is, of course, important that teachers resist the temptation to simply borrow materials designed for English speaking children. Phonics materials for LEP adults must use key words that are meaningful to them and which they recognize aurally and can say. Three sets of commercially available materials designed for ESL adults use the phonics approach. Two sets, one by Longfield and one by Haverson and Haynes are literacy supplements designed to accompany English as a Second Language: A New Approach for the 21st Century, published by Modulearn. Another set, two phonics workbooks by Bassano are also used as a supplement to other materials.

For more depth and specific examples of strategies for teaching the nonliterate LEP adults, the following papers by Savage, Crandall, Ranard and Haverson are extremely helpful.

- Savage, K. Lynn, "Teaching Strategies for Developing Literacy Skills in Non-Native Speakers of English." ca. 1984. (Paper prepared for the National Institute of Education) San Francisco: Community College Centers.

- Crandall, JoAnn, "Why Teach Literacy? What Should We Teach? How Should We Teach It?" (Paper presented to MATESOL Conference on Literacy, Reading, and ESL, October 24, 1981)

- Ranard, D. and Haverson, W. "Teaching ESL to Illiterate Adults", (Adult Education Series #9) Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1981. [Reprint]

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Boyd, John R. and Mary Ann. 1982. Before Book One. New York: Regents Teacher's Manual

Haverson, Wayne and Judith L. Haynes 1982. Modulearn ESL Literacy Program: Learner Workbook, Pre-Reading Worksheets. Teacher's Guides: Phonics; Sight Words; Writing. San Juan Capistrano, CA: Modulearn.

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Mrowicki, L. and P. Furnborough. 1982. A New Start. Student books 1 & 2. Teacher's book and literacy workbook. Exeter, NH: Heinemann Educational Books.

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BASIC SKILLS EDUCATION IN THE ARMY

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Several aspects of Army education are different from the issues being raised in this symposium. In the Army parents are not encouraged to become involved in the education and training of their children. Furthermore, the limited-English-proficient (LEP) soldiers are often literate and the illiterate soldiers are usually not LEP. The Army, however, does have illiterate soldiers and LEP soldiers, and the consequences of these deficiencies are quite serious. I will briefly discuss problems associated with limited literacy and limited-English proficiency in the military and then review some of the Army basic skills programs in these areas.

Next to our public schools, the Army is one of the larger organizations involved in teaching basic skills in this country. About 90,000 soldiers receive instruction in basic skills each year in order to patch up the breakdown of the school-to-work sequence. And it is work, or the job, that the Army is ultimately concerned about. In 1978 Congress mandated that on-duty education programs be related to soldiers' training and job needs. The new program called the Basic Skills Education Program (BSEP) was to provide soldiers with instruction in the reading, writing, speaking, listening, and computing skills that they needed to perform their military duties through their first enlistment.

In order to appreciate the effect of basic skill deficiencies on soldiers' performance, it is useful to briefly consider the sequence of early stages in a soldier's career. Figure 1 presents an outline of these stages, from the initial eligibility testing to joining the permanent duty unit and performing one's job.

There are number of criteria a person has to meet to become eligible for the Army. One of them is set by the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) which consists of ten sub-tests which include arithmetic reasoning, work knowledge, paragraph comprehension, science, electronics, etc. Four of these sub-tests determine a person's eligibility. The entire battery is used to determine which Army jobs a person qualifies for.

After passing the entrance examination, the trainees begin eight weeks of Basic Training (BT) where they are taught fundamental military skills. After BT, trainees go on to 7 to 25 weeks of Advanced Individual training (AIT) where they learn their jobs or Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). On completing training, soldiers join their permanent units and begin perfoming their Army jobs.

What are the possible effects of limited literacy on this process? An illiterate person is unlikely to get a high enough score on the four main ASVAB sub-tests to be eligible for the Army. If the person is eligible, he or she is more likely to only qualify for the more limited jobs such as infantry, artillery and maintenance, not jobs like engineering, electronics and data processing. The potentially negative effect of illiteracy and limited-English proficiency carries through the succeeding stages. There is data relating language skills and literacy to failing to complete training, poor job performance, attrition, safety problems, and low motivation (TRADOC, 1982; Salas, Kincaid and Ashcroft, 1980). This adds up to problems and higher costs for the military.

I will briefly describe basic skills instruction in the Army using four questions.

What are the populations deficient in basic skills?

There are two populations: Non-native English speakers or a real LEP population, and native English speakers who have not mastered the basic skills. These two populations are very different. The LEP population consists of approximately 85% native Spanish speakers, of whom more than 80% are from Puerto Rico. Koreans are the next largest language group. Nearly 90% of the LEP population are high school graduates, a sizable minority have had one or more years of college. Usually they have some skill in reading English, their greatest problem is with spoken English. More than 2,000 of these soldiers receive English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction each year.

The other population consists of soldiers who receive instruction in reading, communication, or math because they do not meet Army standards. For Army purposes, mastery of the basic skills means functioning at, or above, the ninth grade level. Currently less than 80% of this population have high school diplomas, nearly 90% are native English speakers, 8% are Spanish speakers, approximately 50% are Black, and approximately 45% are white. The Army provides instruction to more than 80,000 these soldiers each year.

How do basic skill deficiencies affect Army performance?

One example of the relation between basic skill deficiencies and performance is reflected in the effect of limited-English proficiency on completing basic training. The Army's standard instrument for measuring the English proficiency of LEP soldiers is the English Comprehension Level Test (ECLT). The ECLT, developed by the Defense Language Institute English Language Center (DLIELC), is probably the most widely used English language test in the Armed Services. There are more than a dozen alternative forms of this test and replacement versions are developed every year. Each form consists of 120 multiple-choice items with four posible answers per item. Respondents make their answers on a separate answer sheet. Part I of the ECLT consists of 75 items: the stimulus portion is presented on audio tape, the multiple-choice response portion is given in the test booklet. The remaining 45 items in Part II are presented through the test booklet. Lexical items comprise 75% of the test content, with the remainder being structural items and paragraph comprehension (DLIELC, 1980). ECLT scores can range from zero to 100.

In 1983-84, the American Institutes for Research evaluated an ESL program that provided six weeks instruction before trainees began BT (Rosenbaum and Stoddart, 1984). The evaluation included a follow-up of program graduates through BT. We found a linear relation between trainees' language proficiency and completing BT. Language proficiency in this case was measured by the ECLT. The ECLT scores of two groups of soldiers are compared in Table 1: those who complete BT and those who failed BT and were discharged from the Army. Both groups exited the ESL Program with a range of ECLT scores. However those with scores of 50 or more had a relatively low percent of attrition while the attrition rate for soldiers with scores below 50 steadily increased to more than one third for the lowest ECLT range.

What is the Army doing to improve basic skills?

We will first consider ESL instruction as indicated in Figure 1, then return to literacy instruction in a later section. LEP soldiers who score less than 70 on the ECLT when they enter the Army are sent to DLI in San Antonio for up to 24 weeks of ESL instruction before going to BT. The curriculum is the American Language Course (ALC). The course uses an audio/lingual structural approach, four hours/day in the classroom, two hours in the language lab. The course objective is to "modify students' behavior language patterns." Students learn dialogues, perform sentence pattern repetitions, sentence completion exercises, sentence transformations, etc. There is usually some conversational interaction, depending upon the skills of the teacher. LEP soldiers in permanent duty units who score less than 70 on the ECLT are eligible for the BSEPII/ESL program. This program varies across installations in duration and curriculum.

How successful is the Army at improving soldier basic skills?

As measured by gains on the ECLT the Army ESL programs seem fairly successful. The current program at DLIELC is a new one and we do not yet have data on it. We do have data on ECLT gains from a similar program conducted at DLIELC in 1981 for only three months. Program gains are displayed in Figure 2 where soldiers are grouped together by their entry ECLT score, 0-29, 30-39, etc. The figure shows that all groups continued to make language gains as they progressed though the course. Average language gains in this course were about 2 ECLT points per week. ECLT gains for the six week course referred to in Table 1 were slightly higher, approximatly 2.5 points per week. Using the ECLT gains achieved in the six week course, we estimate that the course reduced attrition by nearly 40%. Follow up data, however, show that despite these gains, many soldiers feel they are still having problems with their ability to speak and understand English.

Let us now return to the literacy programs. Of interest is the BSEP I literacy program for soldiers who perform at less than sixth grade level as measured by the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). Several years ago, this program instructed several thousand soldiers a year. In recent years, as the Army has been able to raise its standards and still meet its manpower objectives, the program population has been greatly reduced. As Figure 1 indicates, soldiers who arrive at their training bases and perform at less than sixth grade level on the TABE are placed in six week DSEP I program before starting BT. Unfortunately, we have little data on this program. It is very heterogeneous, developed by the teachers and education staff at each of the eight installations that conduct Army basic training.

By far the largest basic skills program is the BSEP II program for soldiers who have completed training and are stationed at their permanent duty installations in the U.S., Germany, Korea, etc. This program is intended to provide soldiers with proficiency in reading, communication and math. It is a varied program. One curriculum is used in the U.S., Korea, and Panama and a different one is used in Germany.

The U.S. curriculum is intended to be an individualized, open entry, open exit program and is, in effect, designed to increase soldiers' scores on the TABE. It is organized into 15 modules or units of instruction: seven in math, three in reading, and five in language. The curriculum uses a self-instructional model. Based on pre-test scores, students are assigned work in a module. When

they complete the work they are post-tested; if successful they go on to a new module and pre-test. The teacher is largely a curriculum manager. Table 2 shows the TABE gains for a group of soldiers who receive between 60-137 hours of instruction in this program, with an average of 100 instruction hours. Most gains vary between one and two and one-half grade levels. Table 3 shows the soldiers' success in reaching the ninth grade level. As expected, those who started closer to ninth grade are more likely to reach ninth grade.

How does the Army handle the illiterate LEP problem? It has two programs: one to teach soldiers English, another to teach them reading and communication. In the short run for initial training, this approach seems at least immediately successful. The results are not a clear, however, when assessed in terms of the soldiers' first enlistment or even re-enlistment. The limited data available suggests that some soldiers are still having problems with spoken English and it is likely that many resolve this problem by not re-enlisting.

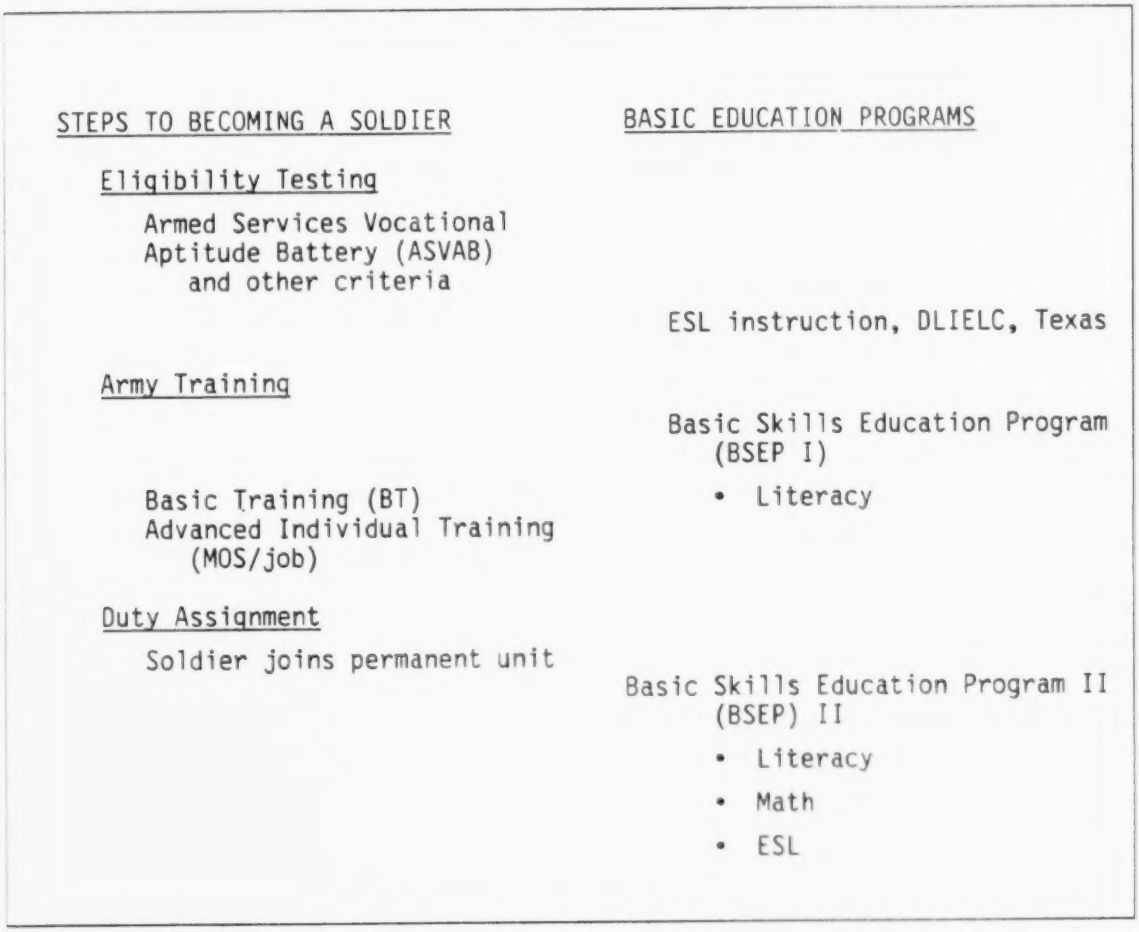

Figure 1. Interface of Basic Education Programs with Stages in Soldiers' Career

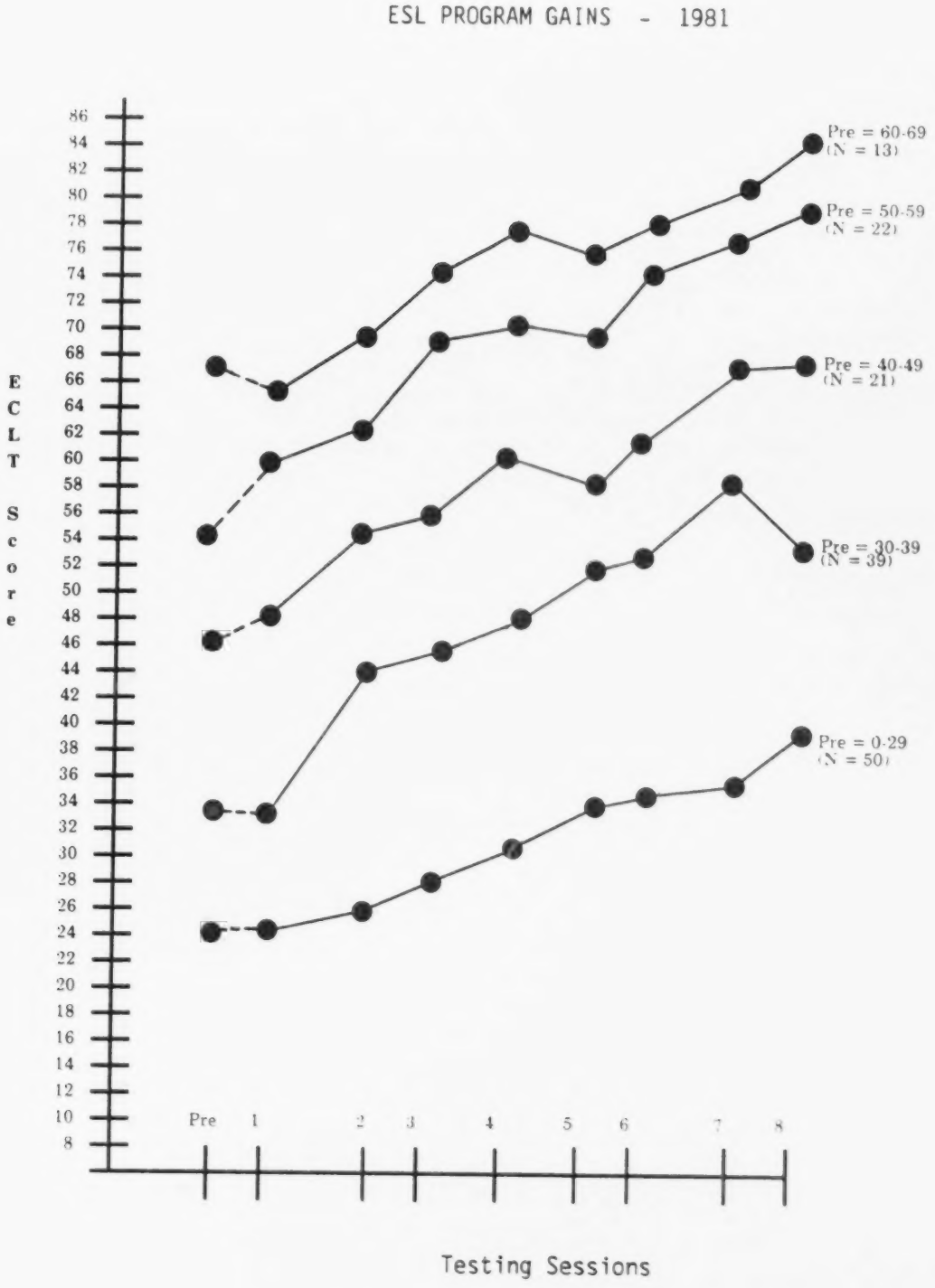

Figure 2. Median ECLT Scores by Testing Session and Initial Score Level of 3 Month Group.

TABLE 1

PERFORMANCE OF GRADUATES OF A SIX WEEK
BSEP I/ESL PROGRAM

Comparison of Soldiers Completing BT with Those Who Were Discharged from BT

	Exit ECLT score						
Attrition Category	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	>69	n
Completeted BT	64%	75%	84%	91%	92%	93%	507
Discharged from BT	36%	25%	16%	9%	8%	7%	75
n	36	63	95	123	119	146	582

TABLE 2

BSEP II PROGRAM GAINS

Mean Grade Level Gains on TABE Subtests

TABE Subtest	N	Grade Level Gain
Vocabulary	1985	.9
Comprehension	1984	1.3
Total Reading	1918	1.1
Computation	2151	2.5
Concepts & Problems	2124	1.7
Total Mathematics	2064	2.1
Mechanics & Expression	1922	1.5
Spelling	1840	.7
Total Battery	1035	1.3

TABLE 3

Distribution by Pre-TABE Scores of Soldiers who Achieved the 9.0 Grade Level and Completed all Assigned Materials

Pre-TABE Grade Level Score	Math (n-873)	Reading (n=563)	Language (n=508)
5.0 - 5.9	1.6%	1.6%	14.6%
6.0 - 6.9	7.8%	11.6%	18.1%
7.0 - 7.9	42.4%	36.2%	29.9%
8.0 - 8.9	48.2%	50.6%	37.4%

* * *

Discussants: Dr. Esther Eisenhower, ESL Program Coordinator, Fairfax County Public Schools, Fairfax, Virginia

Dr. JoAnn Crandall, Director, Communication Services, Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, D.C.

Both discussants agreed with the presenters that the focus on literacy skills for LEP students should be long-term goal-oriented. Eisenhower emphasized the need for qualified ESL teachers and the necessity to provide them with resources and support, such as master teachers and summer training programs.

Eisenhower also raised the need to be vigilant in the placement of LEP children; often they are placed in slow classes because of their language skills rather than their cognitive abilities.

Whether or not literacy instruction can be provided in the child's first language, schools must not lose sight of the fact that they must teach their children English by providing them with the best curriculum available.

Crandall emphasized the need for differentiating between the needs which literacy tasks demand for academic purposes and those demanded for the world of work. Furthermore, the skills that are demanded are often ones which should be transferred quickly. Maintaining a balance thus becomes a difficult task. Crandall agreed that long-term goals should not be sacrificed to short-term goals and vice versa.

Crandall pointed out that adult ESL students are better placed by their higher education than their English--that, in fact, literacy is a key barrier. If someone has prior education then the speed at which that person will acquire English is dramatically different from the student who doesn't have the education. So to separate the nonliterate person out and provide him/her with the special help is a positive step.

Finally, she commented on the tone of the papers which all affirm that language development is a means to an end.

The discussion raised the question of making sure that physical problems such as the need for glasses or the effects of malnutrition, diabetes, etc., also be taken into consideration when dealing with LEP populations since they are serious factors in determining the success rate of adults (and children) learning to read.